

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
May 21 & 22, 2003**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 8:30 a.m., on May 21, 2003, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present were: Aubrey Davis, Chair, Ed Barnes, Elmira Forner, George Kargianis, A. Michèle Maher, Chris Marr and Connie Niva.

GOVERNOR GARY LOCKE

Governor Locke joined the Commission and thanked it for its help and support in moving the transportation-funding package through the Legislature. He spoke briefly regarding how critical highway improvement is to Washington State's economy, safety, movement of people, freight and goods. He spoke about the Nickel Package stating that it is just a start in meeting the overwhelming transportation needs of the state. The Legislature's passing of reforms, accountability measures and performance audits are a good step. He indicated that state government should demonstrate to the public that it can perform. Moving forward he stressed that there needs to be innovation, and that transportation projects need to get going as quickly as possible, which may rely greatly on design build and greater partnerships. This may require more innovation in the construction and purchasing of ferries. He emphasized that the public clearly needs to know the cost and completion dates of projects, and how their current and new gas tax dollars are being spent. He stated that the Department of Transportation should advertise its projects in order to gain greater support for the future. He thanked the Commission and Department of Transportation employees that perform daily tasks and maintain the state's transportation system.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2003 and April 16, 2003 Commission meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

HOMELAND SECURITY BRIEFING

Brian Ziegler, Director, Maintenance & Operations, briefed the Commission regarding homeland security and the protection of transportation assets against terrorist attacks. The Department has taken steps to protect its employees and the traveling public by using effective communication such as, the Eyes and Ears brochure, Terrorism Alert Notification System, Integrated Transportation Analysis System and security awareness training for employees. There will be revisions to emergency plans and operational procedures as a result of an ongoing vulnerability assessment. Terry Simmonds, Emergency Management Program Manager, briefed the Commission regarding the Transportation Terrorism Alert Notification System, stating that the system is used to provide emergent information internally and externally. Mr. Simmonds described a recent disaster simulation that involved WSDOT, the Washington State Patrol and Department of Health. He outlined

the risks to critical structures and the State's economy. Commissioners shared questions and answers on homeland security and funding.

GRAY NOTEBOOK PRESENTATION

Secretary MacDonald announced that future versions of the Gray Notebook would be modified and expanded to reflect the Department's accountability reporting process to the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC). Secretary MacDonald thanked Departmental staff for all of their hard work on the Gray Notebook in its current form, and moving forward with new methods he looks forward to working with staff on the new version. Commissioners expressed concerns about maintaining the current information that is published in the Gray Notebook and that it still is provided in a consistent manner in one location.

Daniela Bremmer, Director, Strategic Assessment, provided the Commission a brief highlight of the contents of the Gray Notebook. Harold White, Program Delivery Manager, updated the Commission regarding the Highway Construction Quarterly Report covering project delivery, scheduled advertisement dates, deferrals and adjustments to the original plan. He outlined the cash flow plan versus actual expenditures. Mr. White reviewed a list of highway safety projects planned versus actual projects advertised in the 2001-2003 biennium for the quarter ending March 31, 2003. Charles Prestrud, Transportation Planner and Toby Rickman, State Traffic Engineer, briefed the Commission regarding measuring traffic congestion in the Puget Sound area. The Department has analyzed traffic volumes in King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties for several years. Recent trends reflect that all modes of transportation have declined and may be a result of several factors such as employment trends and highway improvements in the region. There was also a reduction in traffic accidents and travel times. Mr. Rickman presented the Incident Response Quarterly Report update to the Commission outlining examples of incidents that lasted between 15 to 90 minutes and the clearing of incidents with 90 minutes. Secretary MacDonald emphasized that the Legislature has completely endorsed the Incident Response Program and the congestion relief benefits.

Carol Lee Roalkvan, Co-Manager, Environmental Compliance Branch and Bob Thomas, Wetland Monitoring Program, briefed the Commission regarding the Department's strategic approach to environmental management. The Department analyzes the impact of proposed transportation projects under the National Environmental Policy Act and the State Environmental Policy Act. Before a project design can be finalized an environmental assessment and Environmental Impact Statement must be completed to ensure compliance. The Department is working towards the implementation of the Environment Management System (EMS) a data system that will be used to track environmental documents under development. This system would ensure that timelines with key resources and regulatory agencies are met. Scott Cary, Statewide Erosion Control Coordinator, briefed the Commission regarding erosion control. He outlined the Department's implementation of a database program that evaluates erosion potential on moderate to high-risk projects in order to protect streams from construction site erosion and runoff.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM STATUS REPORT

Carol Lee Roalkvam and Patty Lynch, Co-Managers, Environmental Compliance Branch, reported on the progress of the Environmental Management System (EMS). EMS is a tool used by enterprises across the country and around the world to improve environmental performance and compliance. Ms. Lynch described the seven building blocks of EMS that focus on written procedures, training, monitoring, corrective action, record keeping, performance measures and auditing to ensure environmental compliance. The EMS applies to construction, maintenance and operations, the materials lab and modal programs such as Washington State Ferries, aviation and rail. EMS will be implemented in stages.

REPORT ON PLANNING PORTION OF STATE PLANNING AND RESEARCH FUNDS

Rick Smith, Director, Planning and Capital Program Management, briefly outlined Federal Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) funding. He provided a detailed pie chart that showed the distribution of funds statewide and regionally that are used to fund transportation planning efforts.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Maher reported attending RTPO meetings and a Light Rail Development Workshop. She commented about community input regarding projects.

Commissioner Forner reported that she had visited a submerged floating tunnel project while on vacation in Norway. She also recently attended a TPEAC meeting. As a result of this meeting she suggested that the Department implement a process where projects with issues be brought to top management's attention immediately. Secretary MacDonald explained the complications of bumping projects up to that level.

Commissioner Marr reported his ongoing involvement with the downtown Spokane Partnership and the issues surrounding planning and design of projects. He suggested that the Department, Commission and Legislature take steps to reinforce to the public their accountability commitments.

Commissioner Niva commented regarding recent Departmental organizational changes stating how important it is that the Department remain flexible in order to meet new challenges. She reported attending the Freight Mobility Roundtable.

Commissioner Barnes reported attending an Economic Development meeting in Yakima and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe ribbon cutting of the Sequim Bay scenic pull-out. Chair Davis thanked Commissioner Barnes for his representation of the Commission throughout the state.

Commissioner Kargianis reported that he plans to attend the West Coast Corridor Conference in June. He commented regarding his continued participation in the I-405 Executive Committee.

Chair Davis touched on several issues including the importance of Commissioners meeting with House and Senate Committee members. He also distributed the Commission Administrator position description to Commissioners for review and comments. He asked that Commissioner Maher review the applications.

Chair Davis referenced a draft response letter to Bill Wright that had been distributed to Commissioners for review and approval. Commissioners approved the letter.

APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Chair Davis requested Commissioner Niva and Commissioner Forner to act as the nominating Committee to interview Commissioners regarding the election of officers for FY 2004. The July 1, 2003 - June 30, 2004 (FY 2004) officers will be elected during the regular Commission meeting in June 2003.

WSDOT CENTENNIAL ACCORD PLAN

Colleen Jollie, Tribal Liaison, distributed the Centennial Accord Plan to the Commission. This plan provides the framework for the Department to implement the Tribal Consultation Policy. It identifies services and programs that are available to the tribes across the agency and at the regional offices. The plan focuses on government-to-government relations between the Department and the tribes.

ENDORSEMENT OF I-5 TRANSPORTATION & TRADE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Don Wagner, SW Region Administrator, briefed the Commissioner regarding the history behind the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership. The purpose of today's presentation was to request the Commission's endorsement of the conceptual framework of the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan. Dean Lookingbill, Executive Director, SW Washington Regional Transportation Council, summarized plan recommendations that are to expand lane capacity, interchange improvements, add an additional bridge or replacement bridge and a phased light rail loop. The majority of the recommendations are based on an analysis of solutions that would eliminate bottlenecks and reduce congestion. Environmental analysis and further action will be needed to refine the recommendations before they can be adopted by Metropolitan Planning Organizations, local jurisdictions, or states.

Commissioner Barnes motioned, and Commissioner Maher seconded, to approve the conceptual framework of the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership Strategic Plan recommendations. The motion passed unanimously.

WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES QUARTERLY REPORT

Mike Thorne, CEO, Washington State Ferries, provided an update regarding the current business operations and financial performance of WSF. Sam Kuntz, Chief Financial Officer, Washington State Ferries, reported on year to date and current revenue trends and

ridership, the redevelopment of Pier 52 and parking lots. Mr. Thorne commented regarding Legislative actions and the effect of these actions on the WSF Strategic Operating and Capital Plan. He stated that the legislature passed enabling legislation and funding for WSF as presented in the 2003-2005 budget previously approved by the Commission. He touched briefly on WSF's future plans to purchase new vessels to replace obsolete ones in the next two years. Chair Davis requested that Mr. Thorne provide a memorandum to the Commission outlining timelines related to WSF future plans construction plans. Bill Green, WSF Capital Program Manager, provided an update on the status of the operating and capital expenditures compared to the budget.

REPORT ON REAUTHORIZATION OF TRANSPORTATION PERMIT EFFICIENCIES ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE (TPEAC)

Greg Selstead, Director, Environmental Services, stated that Environmental Services' approach emphasizes on project and implementation, in order to demonstrate efficiency and accountability measures that would improve permitting processes and outcomes of state transportation projects. Peter Downey, Environmental Streamlining Manager, provided an overview of the Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC). He stated that TPEAC was authorized by the 2001 legislative session and has now been reauthorized by ESB 5279. The reauthorization contained specific directions for TPEAC's work in the coming months and years. The original TPEAC legislation required TPEAC to develop a "one stop permit decision making process that uses interdisciplinary review of transportation projects of statewide significance to streamline and expedite permit decision making." TPEAC's directive from the Legislature is to review the Department's transportation project list and determine which projects or activities may develop interdisciplinary agreements. By June 30, 2003, TPEAC is to develop a work plan and submit a report to the Legislature that includes a schedule of activities and resources needed to achieve completion of the highest priority multi-agency programmatic agreements.

WSDOT HIGHWAY PROJECT MITIGATION COSTS: CASE STUDIES

Ken Smith, Assistant State Design Engineer, briefed the Commission regarding highway project mitigation costs. The Department primarily aims to improve the safety and capacity of roadways and extend their use. The Department shares with citizens and other agencies the responsibility for seeing that project mitigation is reasonable and properly meets legal requirements. He stated that permitting is a challenging forum in which shared responsibility is carried out. Unavoidable negative environmental impacts from projects, however minimal, will be mitigated.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY REPORT

Secretary MacDonald, expressed his appreciation to the Traffic Safety Program and the Traffic Safety Commission for their efforts in working with communities to alleviate alcohol related traffic accidents. He outlined highlights of recent legislative actions and provided a report on the new Revenue Expenditure Plan, legislative accountability and what the next steps are.

Secretary MacDonald, briefed the Commission regarding the implementation of the Transportation Efficiency Act of 2003 (SSB 5248). He briefly addressed the use of herbicides to manage roadside vegetation commenting on the Department's methods of use, and the precautions that are taken for employee safety and the environment.

Amy Arnis, Manager, Financial Planning Office, provided a summary of the enacted 2003-05 funding package. She briefed the Commission regarding the five-cent gas tax increase, the 15 percent increase in weight fees and proceeds from bonds. She outlined the Nickel Funding Package and distribution of new funds restricted to highway use (18th Amendment) and new funds available for any transportation investment. Ms. Arnis discussed legislation that impacts the Regional Transportation Investment District's (RTID) distribution of funds and federal matching of funds.

Bill Ford, Budget Chief, provided an overview of the 2003-05 Capital Budget that included program structure changes, 2003 Supplemental Budget adjustments, and projected expenditures for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. The operating budget includes funding to implement the Transportation Efficiency Act of 2003 (SSB 5248), which requires the following: The Department is to develop and implement a financial incentive program and to establish a human resources skills bank; all public transportation systems are to submit a maintenance management plan for certification by the Commission; cities and towns are to provide the Commission with preservation rating information, and staffing and other administrative costs have been reduced with the expectation that the department will achieve additional administrative efficiencies. Commissioners shared a question and answer period discussing the budget.

Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff, provided a briefing of projects that are included in the Nickel Funding Package enacted for transportation by the 2003 Washington State Legislature, and highway construction projects planned to start by June 2005. She assured that the Department would follow the Legislature's reporting requirements to the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) and Performance Audit Board. She commented that the Commission would probably have a dialogue with the LTC to discuss performance measures and outcome measures that will be integrated into the LTC review.

PROPOSAL TO NAME 320TH STREET CROSSING OF I-5, THE "MARYANN MITCHELL MEMORIAL INTERCHANGE"

Lorena Eng, Administrator, Northwest Region, requested the Commission's approval of Resolution No. 650 to rename Interstate 5, 320th Street Interchange to the "Maryann Mitchell Memorial Interchange." Representative Mitchell served 10 years in the Legislature as member of the House Transportation Committee in which she served as vice chairwomen from 1995 - 2000 and co-chairwomen from 2000 - 2001. She also worked tirelessly representing her constituents in the 30th District.

Andrew Johnson, Governor's Transportation Advisor, and nephew of Maryann Mitchell, thanked the Commission for approving Resolution No. 650 establishing the Interchange in her honor.

It was moved by Commissioner Kargianis, and seconded by Commissioner Forner to approve Resolution No. 650, approving the renaming of Interstate 5, 320th Street Interchange to the Maryann Mitchell Memorial Interchange. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioners, Secretary MacDonald, David Dye and Senator Horn expressed their gratitude to the Mitchell family for Maryann Mitchell's service to the Legislature and her community. Resolution No. 650 was signed by Commissioners and presented to her husband Sam Mitchell by Chair Davis.

LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD

Senator Jim Horn and Representative Ed Murray spoke to the Commission regarding processes and project delivery. Senator Horn emphasized the need for the state to provide a vision for use by the MPO/RTPO in their planning to assure statement continuity. He spoke about processes to improve project delivery reporting with emphasis on highways of statewide significance, the new performance audit process and the new focus on efficiencies.

Representative Murray spoke to the expectations for improved accountability and planning processes. He emphasized that our system needs to be integrated using all modes to move people to and from their jobs.

Legislator's complete comments are available upon request.

UPDATE ON TEA-21 REAUTHORIZATION AND FEDERAL FUNDING

Larry Ehl, Federal Liaison, reviewed highlights of TEA-21 reauthorization, the FFY 2004 federal appropriations, and the impact of the new state transportation laws on WSDOT's federal funding requests. He explained the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 (SAFETEA), the United States Department of Transportation's proposal. The goal of the proposal is to modernize federal safety programs, create jobs, sustain economic growth, reduce congestion, minimize project delays, increase funding flexibility for states and localities, improve public transit efficiency and increase protection of the environment.

URBAN CORRIDORS OFFICE UPDATE

David Dye, Administrator, Urban Corridors, updated the Commission regarding the Urban Corridors Office project expenditure plans adjusted to reflect the passage of the new revenue package (Nickel Plan), and plans to update their major project estimates using the Cost Estimate Validation Process (CEVP). The significant increase in transportation funding in ESHB 1163 allocated to specific projects, forming the Nickel Plan allows project environmental and decision making, project design, project right of way acquisition, and in some cases, construction of high-priority sections to proceed. However, the overall project scopes and cost are somewhat in flux as a result of scoping changes due to Regional Transportation Investment Districts (RTID) input and uncertainty.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Will Knedlik, resident, Kirkland, addressed the Commission regarding Sound Transit phase-one projects. He commented regarding negotiated contracts and debt needs stating he feels that this causes public distrust for both the Commission and Sound Transit.

Mr. Knedlik stated that he urges Sound Transit Board to initiate performance audits. Chair Davis responded that there is a Committee that is currently setting up performance audits for Sound Transit.

Bruce Nurse, Vice President, Kemper Development Company, thanked the Commission for their Outreach Program within communities, and the Department for meeting with the business community in Bellevue concerning regional transportation projects. He also expressed his thanks to the Commission for its efforts and support in the passage of recent legislation. He spoke briefly regarding RTID funding.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m., on May 22, 2003.